

THE STRANGE WAY IN WHICH THE VISHNU-MOTH
(*TRABALA VISHNU*) DEPOSITS HER EGGS IN THE
SHAPE OF LARVÆ.¹

BY ERIC MJÖBERG.

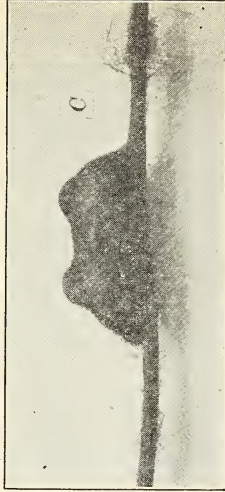
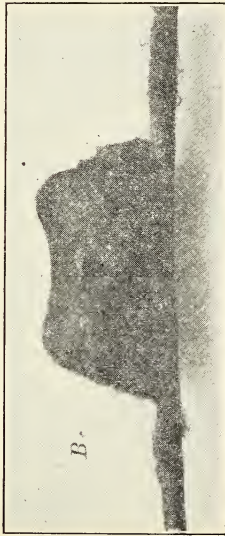
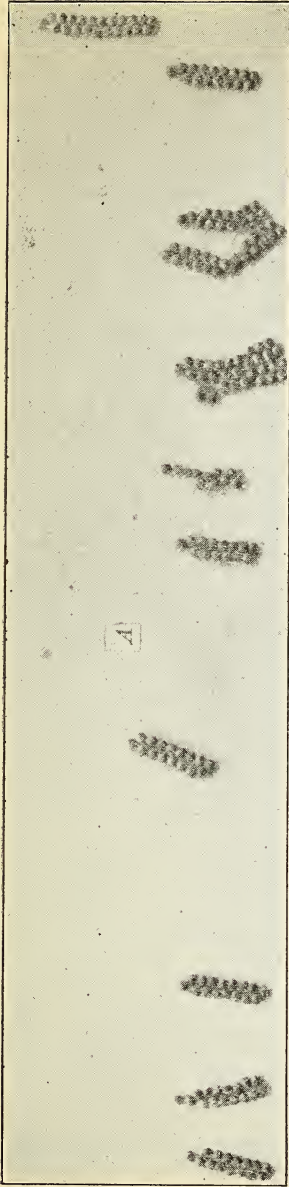
In the small residential town of Kuching, Borneo, an invasion of voracious caterpillars in the garden and house of one of the residents was reported to me in October 1924. Certain plants were entirely defoliated and a large number of large hairy caterpillars of the usual Lasiocampid type were seen crawling about everywhere, even entering the rooms of the house and causing much inconvenience and annoyance. Obviously a mass propagation due to favorable circumstances had taken place. Ordinarily *Trabala vishnu* is a moth of rare occurrence; even in the rich collections of the Sarawak Museum only some few specimens were to be found.

As the larva has already been described and figured, I shall not consider it in the present note.

A fertilized female was temporarily placed by me in an empty paper box and left over night. On opening the box on the following day I was very much surprised to see beside the moth, a considerable number of larvæ on the sides. I thought it very strange to begin with, but a somewhat closer examination soon revealed the fact that what I had taken for larvæ consisted of eggs laid in two parallel rows with an odd egg at the top. Furthermore, the mother had arranged it so that a darkly pigmented spot on each egg was always directed outwards with the effect that two dark longitudinal lines were formed, reminding one of the condition so often found in caterpillars. When I add that the mother had covered the egg strings with hairs from her own body, it is easy to understand that these completely conveyed the impression of being small hairy caterpillars.

On plate 1, A, a photograph of the eggs found in the box is reproduced. There are altogether 13 string, 8 laid separately and 5 more or less joined together. In nearly every string an

¹Contribution from the Entomological Laboratory of the Bussey Institution, Harvard University, No. 258.



MJÖBERG—OVIPOSITION OF VISHNU MOTH

A. Eggs of the Vishnu Moth (*Trabala vishnu*) laid in two parallel rows with one odd egg at the top, and covered with hairs by the mother, thus giving a complete impression of being hairy larvae. B. Cocoon of male. C. Cocoon of female.